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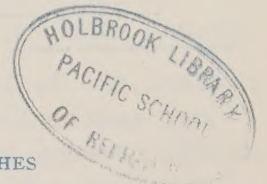
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the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
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The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

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July 23, 1948

Amsterdam Special

The Christian Attitude to the Jews

Anti-Semitism is a secular word and a secular conception according to the statement on "The Christian Attitude to the Jews" prepared for consideration by the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam. This subject has been selected as one of the "four concerns of the Churches" to be further studied by the Assembly. The statement indicates that "there are broadly speaking three theological positions as to the basis of approach by the Churches to the Jews. The first assumes that there is because of the newness of God's revelation in Christ a deep difference between the theological position of Christians and of Jews. The second takes the view that the revelation of the Old Testament to the Jews has a validity for both Christians and Jews which affects the basis of approach. The third desires cooperation between Christians and Jews on the basis of their common ethical ideals, and does not seriously raise the matter of the differences between them in religious faith and practice."

Other aspects of the situation to be considered in this "Concern" are: "Christian guilt in the attitude to the Jews" - "Christian action against anti-Semitism" - "The question of Christians of Jewish origin" and "Evangelism". "We feel very strongly", the report states in its discussion of Evangelism, "that kindness and friendship movements, while necessary and valuable in themselves, are insufficient, unless leading to Evangelism".

Reference is made in this statement to the Jewish survivors in Europe. A correspondent is quoted as saying "We are called to rescue the survivors who are left in Europe. Many of them still in Displaced Persons Camps and are apparently unwanted anywhere in the world. For the Church merely to have pity for the Jews involved, seems, under the circumstances, pharisaical".

The Rt Rev. Angus Dun, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese, Washington D.C., will chair the Delegates' Sub-Committee which will prepare the report on this concern for presentation to the Assembly.

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAINMessage from Lambeth Conference to the Russian
Orthodox Church

The Archbishop of Canterbury has sent a letter on behalf of the Lambeth Conference to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia conveying good wishes and congratulations on the 500th anniversary of the autocephaly of the Russian Church. The letter has been taken to Moscow by the Metropolitan of Thyateira, Dr Germanos, who is representing the Ecumenical Patriarch at the celebration.

The letter states: "The history of your Church is a splendid one, and it has made signal contributions to the life of Christendom through the many centuries of its existence. The many famous names which adorn the glorious history of the Russian Orthodox Church recall to us the greatness and true Christian character of its history and traditions. The manifold gifts of your great predecessor, St. Philip, and his life of devotion were a worthy example of Christian spirituality... In recent times, too, God has shown His power and grace in your two immediate predecessors, the Patriarchs Tikhon and Sergei. In particular we remember with heartfelt thanks the happy relations which our dear brother, the Archbishop of York, was able to establish with the Patriarch Sergei and the deep impression of spiritual devotion which the Patriarch made upon his English guests. But it is not only in its rulers that the Russian Orthodox Church has shown its glory. In saintly life and in theological work the Russian Church has brought great gifts to the service of God's people...

"We are writing not only on our own behalf and on behalf of the Church of England, but also as the spokesman of 329 Bishops of our Anglican Communion throughout the world who are gathered here at Lambeth in conference".

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATESChurch Bells to Toll at Amsterdam Assembly Opening

Dr Henry Smith Leiper, associate general secretary of the World Council of Churches, announced that Protestant and Orthodox churches in various parts of the United States will ring their bells hourly on Sunday, August 22, to observe the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. The bells will be rung every hour from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. to "call Christians to a moment of silent prayer that the Amsterdam Assembly may mark a rebirth of Christian faith".

E.P.S. Geneva

SWITZERLANDThe World's Alliance of YMCAs in Zurich

The Executive of the World's Committee of Y.M.C.A.s met at Zurich July 4 - 9, devoting its main attention to progress made in carrying out the decisions reached by the World's Committee at its plenary meeting held at Edinburgh in August 1947, and to further implementation of those decisions.

The Executive took cognisance of the fact that the needs of boys throughout the world present new and urgent aspects even more challenging than in earlier periods, urged National Movements to re-establish and extend vigorously their boy's work programmes, and adopted plans for improving its own services with respect to the Christian message, leadership training and exchange of experience regarding important new experiments.

Young Men's Work has been intensified since the Edinburgh meeting when special stress was placed on "mobilising youth". A European Area Young Men's Conference is being held in Denmark this summer. The Executive gave its approval to the holding of an Area Conference for South and East Asia in 1949, and endorsed other long-range plans. National Movements were urged to provide for the maximum responsible participation of younger men in policy and programme-making.

Careful consideration was given to the cooperative relationships of the YMCA to the World Christian Youth Commission. The desire of youth to assume a more active role in the ecumenical movement was recognised as constructive, and it was felt that the YMCA has a special contribution to make because of its inclusion within its constituency of members of all Christian confessions and its ability to reach large segments of youth of other faiths and also those not now touched by the Churches.

Other important decisions and to do with the continuation of emergency services to Displaced Persons and the establishment of resettlement programmes; the fostering of leadership training enterprises including the new International Centre Castle Mainau; further attention to extension - on which considerable progress has been made in the initiation of new work in Africa; support of the International Affairs programme in its educational aspects and its liaison activities in relation to the United Nations, UNESCO, and other specialised agencies; and further development of Area Field Services through which a practical expression is being given to the approach to a global strategy the broad lines of which were laid down at Edinburgh.

Throughout the meeting the Executive was constantly aware of the high responsibility imposed upon it to carry forward the mandate placed upon the World's Committee at the Plenary in these terms:

"Only the Christian Gospel can answer the problems of our age. The YMCA has an unparalleled obligation and opportunity to assist in bringing the youth of the world into fellowship with the living Christ and to the acceptance of the direction of the Holy Spirit... This task is, therefore, supreme and the World's Committee should endeavour to bring home this priority of purpose to all the Associations throughout the world, and to secure the means of doing so effectively."

E.P.S. Geneva

JAPAN

"Japan For Christ" Movement

According to figures published in "Japan for Christ" magazine (Tokyo), a total of 784,893 persons attended meetings held last year under the auspices of the Japan for Christ Movement. Of this number, 110,842 signed cards as inquirers. There were 40,246 applicants for baptism during 1947 and 9,978 were actually baptised.

E.P.S. Geneva

HUNGARY

New Bishop of the Reformed Church

The Rev. Albert Bereczky has been appointed to succeed Bishop L. Ravacz as bishop of the Reformed Church of Hungary by 346 votes against 146.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYConclusion of Church Unification

The Church Assembly of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) - at which addresses of greeting were given by representatives of the Russian, American and French Military Governments, when the French Chief Chaplain, Marcel Sturm, expressed the fellowship of German and French Protestantism, and the Danish Provost Hogsbro brought the good wishes of the World Council of Churches - unanimously passed, at the conclusion of its 5-day deliberations in Eisenach (see EPS No. 28) a Basic Order, which sets out the constitutional basis for the alliance of the Evangelical Land Churches (Landeskirchen) in Germany. Thus the Evangelical Church in Germany, which was hitherto based only upon a provisional order, has received its legal structure as the actually existing fellowship of German Evangelical Christendom. The work of unification begun in Treysa, 1945, immediately after the collapse of Germany, has - as reported in the Evangelical Press Service of Bethel-Bielefeld of July 13 - "come to its conclusion after much effort and inner conflict, and now requires for its consummation the ratification of the individual member Churches and by the Council of the Brethren (Bruderrat)."

The Constitution of the Evangelical Church in Germany

The Constitution of the EKD, described as a Basic Order, contains in its Preamble the confirmation of the confessional bases of the Evangelical Church. This Church is characterised in the basic statements as "a federation of Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches". Thus the federal nature of the EKD is expressed. The constitution defines the relationship between Church and State in the light of ecclesiastical autonomy. It is confirmed that "the Church, for the sake of its commission, regulates and administers its affairs autonomously, and appoints its offices independently of the State".

According to Article 4 "the orderly administration of Holy Baptism is mutually recognised in all member Churches". With regard to admission to the Holy Communion, the principal Article, which was most keenly debated during the deliberations of the Church Assembly, affirms the following: "In many member Churches, members of another valid confession within the EKD will be admitted without restriction. In no member Church will access to the Lord's Table be barred to any member of a confession valid within the EKD, when pastoral responsibility or congregational relationships demand it". As stated in the Bethel Press Service, the Church Assembly could do no more, under these circumstances, than describe the present condition prevailing among the Churches and lay the matter of adequate pastoral ministrations upon the conscience of pastors and people in the member bodies.

The Constitution then lays down in detail the competence of the EKD in relation to the member Churches. According to Article 18 "the EKD represents common church interests in relation to all who exercise public authority". It seeks "a unified action on the part of its member Churches in all realms of public life". Specially significant is the statement that "the EKD cooperates in the ecumenical movement, and promotes the cultivation of ecumenical relationships through church agencies and societies".

There are three stages of membership in the EKD. At the head is the Synod, which is composed of 120 members and has the right to legislate. Next comes the Church Conference, which is made up from the leaderships of the member

Churches and can give subjects for discussion and advice to the Synod. Both agencies together elect the third organ of the EKD, the Council of 12 members, which has the task of leadership and administration. The Church Chancellery and the Church Foreign Office are offices of the Council.

In the provisional regulations of the Constitution it is laid down that the EKD "as a public legal corporation takes over the rights and obligations of its legal predecessors, the German Evangelical Church Federation and the German Evangelical Church". The Constitution of the German Evangelical Church of July 11, 1933, is repealed. Otherwise the general ecclesiastical law remains in force, so far as it does not contravene the new Basic Order.

* * *

After the unanimous adoption of the Church Constitution by the Eisenach Church Assembly, the President of the Synod Dr Heinemann and the Chairman of the Council of the EKD, Bishop Wurm, gave an estimate of the historical significance of the Eisenach decisions. A page of church history had been completed in Eisenach, declared Dr Heinemann, which would stand before the judgment of future generations. The most important results he specified as the union of the Lutheran Churches, the legal foundation of the EKD, and the spiritual consolidation of the Evangelical Church - achieved in serious but fruitful conflicts. If one would make a comparison with political Parliaments, then one must say that the decisions of the Assembly, worked out in a genuine and open debate, had a more enduring stability than much which was produced in the political field.

Bishop Wurm declared that the will to unity had shown itself to be stronger than all oppositions and differences of opinion. That which had come to pass in Eisenach admittedly could not be compared to a cathedral, but rather to a barrack, such as one finds erected in the neighbourhood of the ruined cathedrals in the wrecked cities of Germany. But one may preach and listen to the Word of God in a barrack, and if the Church must take heed that she appears as a Church Triumphant, then a building had now been erected with room for a living exchange of spiritual powers and for the proclamation of the Gospel which had been committed to the Church.

The "Bruderrat" (Fraternal or Brethren's Council) of the Evangelical Church, in its closing session on July 15, took a positive attitude towards the results of the Church Assembly. As the basic Order has once more created a legal synodal organ of EKD, the Council has declared its ecclesiastical functions to be dissolved. The Confessing Church will support the EKD and its leadership, and will continue to concentrate upon its function as the "watchpost" of the Churches.

"Let Peace Come at Last!" - The Evangelical Church in Germany to the World.

The Evangelical Church in Germany addressed the following message to the world:

"Three years after the last terrible war it is not only the German nation that still vainly waits for peace, but in more than one country of the world there is once more war and bloodshed. Yet without peace there can be no reconstruction of the life of the nations, no moral healing of humanity and no possibility of fashioning the life of man according to the will of God. It must be the most urgent effort of all serious people, that at last peace may come and that peace may last.

"The German nation, robbed of its unity and under the control of other powers, can contribute little to the bringing-about of peace. But that little we solemnly promise to do, mindful of our responsibility before the Holy God.

"We Christians must declare that for us the state of war with other nations is ended, even though peace has not yet been granted to us. We no longer see enemies in the members of other nations, whoever they may be, but brothers and sisters, with whom we stand together before God. We beg and implore our fellow-countrymen to rid themselves of the spirit of hatred or animosity against other nations. None of us should allow himself to be the tool of propaganda, through which hostility between nations is encouraged and a deed of treacherous violence prepared. Especially do we warn all members of our nation not to sink into the folly of thinking that our common distress can be alleviated by a new war. There is no blessing in force. Wars only lead to deeper bitterness, hate, suffering and impoverishment. The world needs love, not force. It needs peace, and not war. The Holy Scripture says: in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, and our Lord Jesus Christ says: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The Threefold Need of the German Nation: a Word of the EKD on the Present Situation.

A Word of the Evangelical Church in Germany was delivered on the needs of Germany:

"The Assembly of the EKD cannot ignore the present distress of the German nation. It feels itself compelled for the sake of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ to speak as follows:

"1) Three years after the end of the war, the prisoners of war have still not all returned to the homeland. Thousands are held as prisoners in camps, without any public sentence. Men of our nation are again and again compelled to work in other countries. We request that an end be made to this situation.

"2) The maintenance of zonal boundaries and all measures which tend towards a final partition of Germany must lead to ever increasing suffering and to the dissolution of moral ties. We implore all, who are concerned, resolutely and perseveringly, to oppose any attempt at such a partition, and more and more to urge that the basis of living shall not be taken from the German nation through impossible barriers.

"3) The Church cannot ignore the distress which the currency reform has brought to thousands of German families. Care must be taken that those who do not find work, or who are incapable of work, especially those who are totally incapacitated for work are recommended to the relief of the State or the Church, and are enabled to lead a life worthy of a human being.

If as a result of the currency reform there must be a transition to a new regulation of property and the economic structure, then every attention should be directed to ensure that cleanliness and honesty are restored, and in the case of no economic measure must it be forgotten that economics are for the sake of man, and not the reverse. What is at stake is that man must remain man,

and not be degraded to a mere object. For the sake of God, let man be man, and let him lead a life which is worthy of a man." E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.

For Development of Scientific Knowledge

The Moscow newspaper "Pravda" (June 29, 1948) published an article under the heading "Increase and Improvement of Propaganda with Regard to Scientific Knowledge", in which it says:

"The vigour of our propaganda, based on scientific knowledge, is by no means effective enough. This is particularly the case with regard to the unsatisfactory development of the struggle against religious prejudices. The Stalin constitution has proclaimed, amongst other democratic liberties, the freedom of conscience. All Soviet citizens are at liberty to attend services and at the same time have access to anti-religious propaganda. This is an expression of our Soviet democracy. But freedom of conscience does not mean that our public and scientific organisations are neutral in regard to religion. Forty years ago Lenin emphasised in his struggle against the policy of the opportunists that the revolutionary socialist democracy regards the religious problem as a private matter, but not in its connection with individuals, the doctrine of Marxism, or the workers Party. Lenin asked for an original research on faith and religion on the basis of materialism. Comrade Stalin says that the Communist party cannot remain neutral to religion; it must conduct anti-religious propaganda against all religious prejudices because it sponsors the exact sciences. The religious prejudice contradicts science because every religion contradicts science.

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party requests that every scientific action be closely associated with the concrete tasks of Communist reconstruction. It has to publish the achievements of Soviet science; it has to project the advance of our agricultural and biological sciences, and to ensure that agriculture and industry benefit by the findings of their leading experts. There are enormous possibilities for the development of this scientific and enlightened propaganda. We have millions of members of the intelligentsia who take care of the transfer of their knowledge to the large masses of the Russian people. We have thousands of lecturers, hundreds of thousands of schools, cultural institutions, information centres, and 'red corners'. There are thousands of newspapers and hundreds of periodicals in our country, supplemented by the widespread and powerful system of radio and the cinema. If the organisation of the Communist Party would really and systematically make use of this tremendous power, the future development of scientific propaganda will be guaranteed." E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.

The 500th Anniversary of Independence of the
Orthodox Church

The Russian Orthodox Church celebrated the 500th anniversary of its independence by an opening ceremony in the Yeloshoff Cathedral in Moscow. The following Orthodox Church leaders were among the guests : The Catholicos of Georgia, Patriarch Kallistrat; Patriarch Gavriilo of Yugoslavia; Patriarch Justinian of Roumania; Exarch Stephen of Bulgaria; Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople Germanos; Metropolitan Elias of Lebanon; Bishop Paisy of Albania; Metropolitan Timeteus of Bialystok and Belisk, as well as the

Exarchs of the Russian Patriarcal Churches in West Europe, in Prague, Vienna, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Holland, China and North America. The Armenian Patriarch, Catholicos George VI was also present.

Following a festive Te Deum the Patriarch delivered an address to those present, in which, according to Tass, "he appealed for unity of heart among all Orthodox Churches and for a concerted struggle for peace in the whole world."

E.P.S. Geneva

Where is the Unity of Non-Roman Christianity?

An article entitled "The Ecumenical Movement - Where is the Unity of Non-Roman Christianity" by Father Robert Rouquette has been published in the French Catholic review "Etudes" (July-August, 1948). After sketching the history of the ecumenical movement, Father Rouquette concludes:

"Ecumenicity is unable to show, for the moment, even the beginnings of real unity in faith and discipline. Yet a number of its most important leaders courageously and loyally reject facile and deceptive achievements. It is not the rudiments of the 'Una Sancta', but the prophet of Unity which instils into each conscience the duty of seeking communion in the unique Truth of Christ. It achieves slowly a changing of man's thought in which one can see the miracle of the working of the Holy Spirit..."

"We will not be led astray by rash enthusiasm, which do more harm than good', said M. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council. Barriers which have been raised almost as high as the skies over centuries of separation cannot be destroyed in a few score years. Too many of our Catholic publications, of our Weeks of Unity, by their very desire for peace and spiritual emulation, pervert men's minds by ignoring the insurmountable difficulties and impotency of ecumenicity, its altogether outer character. This is false irenism. We will guard our clearness of vision from the example of the leaders of the ecumenical movement. Putting our faith in the power of God, our hopes in the realisation of the wishes of Christ, we will not endeavour to move more quickly than Providence. For the rest, measuring calmly, and without passion, the scope of the ecumenical movement, endeavouring to place it exactly, and at the same time to be loyal to the inner demands of the Gospel in each of our own lives, we will not fail to recognise in this movement for Unity one of the greatest acts in the history of souls since the separations in Christianity."

E.P.S. Geneva

BRAZIL

Bible Society of Brazil Formed

More than 3,000 persons attended a ceremony in the First Baptist church of Rio de Janeiro which inaugurated the Bible Society of Brazil. The new group was said to be the culmination of more than 110 years of Bible work by both the American and British Bible Societies in Brazil.

E.P.S. Geneva

